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AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

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The Season at Lake Merritt

Lake Merritt was made the first State Game Refuge by an act of the California legislature in 1869. It is a natural salt water lake of about 155 acres, the water level being controlled by electric flood gates on the canal leading to San Francisco Bay. Lakeside Park, the area between the two arms of the lake, covers about 150 acres.

A portion of the lake has been set aside by city ordinance as a refuge for water fowl and boats are kept out of this area by a log boom. An artificial island was constructed in 1923 in this section as a possible breeding ground for the birds. It has been accepted as such, at least, by the Canada Geese. A fresh water fountain for the ducks at the feeding station was erected in 1920.

The first time that ducks were fed at the Lake was during 1915, when a flock of canvas-back ducks, heavily coated with oil, would have starved to death, had such measures not been taken. Ducks are now fed daily at the feeding station at 10 a. m. and 4 p. m., and at the embarcadero a half hour earlier.

Lake Merritt is an official duck banding station, the first banding being done on January 23, 1926. Previous to August 1, 1932, there were 4253 ducks banded with 413 returns from various points. Some were captured as far away as Mexico, Alaska and Canada. Up to the 1932 banding only two birds banded elsewhere had been taken at the lake.

A census of the water-fowl taken by the Oakland Ornithological Club on the afternoon of January 20, 1933, a dull, overcast day, resulted as follows:

Horned Grebe	1	American Golden-eye	38
Eared Grebe	122	Buffle-head	26
Pied-billed Grebe	15	Surf Scoter	1
Mallard	28	Ruddy Duck	217
European Widgeon	1	Coot	573
Baldpate	487	Glaucous-winged Gull	73
Pintail	466	California Gull	31
Shoveller	1	Ring-billed Gull	5
Redhead	1	Black-crowned Night Heron	18
Canvas-back	1080		
Scaup (both species)	250	Total	3434

At the present writing 133 kinds of birds have been identified in the area. Two species, the Sanderling and Semi-palmated Plover, through an oversight were omitted from the check list issued January, 1933, by the Oakland Ornithological Club. Several others, including the Geese, have been introduced, and various domestic and foreign species have been liberated at the lake from time to time.

This winter has produced some outstanding observations. A Wood Duck and a Hooded Merganser were both reported on several occasions. A Barrow Golden-eye and the Redhead Duck were also seen several times. The European Widgeon banded first in 1928 has returned for the fifth consecutive year.

This season did not bring anything outstanding in the park itself. The usual numbers of Waxwings, Gambel, Golden-crowned and Fox Sparrows, Hermit and

Varied Thrushes were present. We were disappointed in not finding the Robins in as large numbers as last winter. That season with its Nuthatches, Grosbeaks and Woodpeckers could not, or should not, be used as a basis for comparison, however, as it was certainly an exceptional winter.

Robert Taylor and Gordon Bolander, Oakland, California.

A Sunday Morning at Mt. Cobb

One of the interesting phases of bird study, when opportunity offers, is that of learning who are some of the earlier risers among the bird families.

I was offered such an opportunity on the morning of May 8, 1932, while spending a week-end in Lake County at Whispering Pines, which consists of a small group of summer cottages located at the foot of Mt. Cobb on the northeast side. Douglas trees, oaks and pines grow here in abundance with an undergrowth of wild lilac and coffee berry.

Since I chose to sleep out in the open, and due to the absolute stillness, I had ample opportunity when morning came to hear all the bird songs and call notes within a considerable distance, provided that I did not sleep too late nor too soundly. I was unable to do either; the reason I will mention later.

On this morning dawn began to appear about a quarter past four. A Western Tanager had been calling during the night at seemingly regular half-hour intervals. Now he burst out into full song; he was perched in a tree directly over my bed. His song was the awakening signal for the other birds. A Western Flycatcher was the first to respond, next an Olive-sided Flycatcher followed by a Robin; a Creeper announced his awakening in a nearby tree, then Chickadees joined in and a Great Horned Owl was heard in the distance. The "kak, kak, kak" of Pileated Woodpeckers was heard nearby, then gradually faded away as they worked their way up the slope. Then Calaveras Warblers joined in, there seeming to be at least one in every tree, and all singing at the same time. Pileolated Warblers were there too and a Wood Pewee could be heard not far away. Cassin Vireos added their questioning and responsive notes and the "All's Well" call of a male California Quail was plainly heard.

With such a chorus in full song, any idea of a morning nap was out of the question. I arose, dressed and walked about to see if the birds which I had been hearing were really present or whether I had been dreaming. It was not yet five o'clock. The birds were there; I had not been dreaming.

No doubt but that at this season of the year this bird chorus is an everyday occurrence at Whispering Pines, but on this morning I liked to think that the birds knew that my host and hostess were here to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of their marriage, and they wanted to do their part. This celebration was my reason for being at Whispering Pines, and dining not wisely but too well the evening before had made sleep well-nigh impossible for me, but this avian awakening more than compensated for the loss of a few hours' sleep, and I was glad to learn that a Western Tanager calls during the night. Perhaps he, too, had dined not wisely but too well.

Later in the day while walking along a willow-bordered stream, I found Chats quite plentiful, seeing four and hearing others.

Charles A. Bryant, San Francisco. January 28, 1933.

February Field Trip

The February Field Trip was taken on Sunday, the 12th, to Easton Drive, Burlingame, with nine members and one guest.

The day was cold with a moderate wind. The heavy mist which began to fall when the trip started, gradually turned to rain. By noontime further birding was impossible; no attempt was made to go beyond the town limits.

In spite of the small area covered, a fair sized list was obtained. The presence of two male Allen Hummingbirds reminded us that the first species of our summer visitants had arrived from their winter home. Cedar Waxwings feeding on cotoneaster berries added to the attractiveness of these berries.

The following species were noted along the Bay Shore Highway: Great Blue Heron; Canvas-back Duck; Surf Scoter; Ruddy Duck; Sparrow Hawk; Killdeer; Short-billed Gull; Black Phoebe; Pipit; Meadowlark; Savannah and Song Sparrows.

Along Easton Drive, Burlingame:

Anna Hummingbird	Bewick Wren	Brewer Blackbird
Allen Hummingbird	Robin	Linnet
Red-shafted Flicker	Varied Thrush	Pine Siskin
California Woodpecker	Hermit Thrush	Green-backed Goldfinch
Hairy Woodpecker	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Spotted Towhee
Black Phoebe	Cedar Waxwing	Brown Towhee
California Jay	Hutton Vireo	Fox Sparrow
Chestnut-back Chickadee	Myrtle Warbler	Junco
Plain Titmouse	Audubon Warbler	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Bush-tit	Townsend Warbler	Nuttall Sparrow
Wren-tit	English Sparrow	Song Sparrow

A total of forty-three species. C. A. Bryant, Historian.

A Mouse Trap Episode

A bird caught in a mouse trap is a rare event in itself, but when the bird had to enter a very small ventilation hole and wander through the dark area between the ceiling and the roof of the house for about fifteen feet or so and then fall into the water heater closet before finding its way into the trap, I think it is worth writing about.

An immature Golden-crowned Sparrow, banded A 181720 at my home station on November 20, 1932, was the bird in this case. On November 27, my next door neighbor heard what he thought was a mouse in the water heater closet so he set a trap for it baited with cheese. A few hours later he heard the trap spring, but investigating found it empty. The trap was set again and not looked at until the following day. To his great surprise, instead of a mouse, the trap contained a bird. The trap had caught the bird across the body, and though my neighbor is convinced the bird was after the cheese, I believe that it had accidently fluttered into the trap.

Robert Taylor, Oakland, California. December 15, 1932.

Research Problems: President Cain in his report for 1932 recommended "that an earnest effort be made to revive and extend the amateur ornithological research undertaken during 1929." It is to be hoped that our members will heed the wisdom of this suggestion and make a real effort to contribute to this interesting and valuable work. Considerable data have already been gathered, but more are desired. The species listed in the projects are Egret Heron, Hummingbirds, Barn Owl, White Pelican, Cliff Swallow, White-tailed Kite and Road Runner. A report giving the names of species, date, location, number of individuals and nesting activities, if any, is what is wanted. If any member wants more detailed information relative to this work he can obtain copies of the problems by addressing "The Gull."

Ornithological records increase in value as they accumulate. Our research problems offer an opportunity to energetic members for study and accomplishment.

Audubon Notes

March Meeting: The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 9th, at 8 p. m., room 19, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Mr. Joseph Dixon, whose subject will be "Mt. McKinley Revisited."

March Field Trip will be taken on Sunday, the 12th, to Point Bonita. Buy round-trip ticket to Sausalito, 25c, and take 8:15 ferry. Bring luncheon.

Directors' Meeting: There will be a meeting of the Directors at 7 p. m., in the Ferry Building.

Observations: The following observations have been reported:

Eugene B. Bizzell: Dumbarton Bridge, January 29, ten Long-billed Curlew; Belle Haven, 100 Band-tailed Pigeons.

Kent Ghirardelli: San Francisco, October 4, Cedar Waxwing.

C. B. Lastreto: Atherton, February 4, Cedar Waxwing.

Vincent Mowbray: San Francisco Bay, February 5, American Golden-eye.

Eddie McClintock: Spring Valley Lakes, January 10, Redhead Duck.

Commander and Mrs. Parmenter: Crystal Springs Lakes, January 7, 1000+ Canada Geese; Tomales Bay, 5th, fifteen American Golden-eyes; many thousand Black Brant; Bodega Bay, eight Long-billed Dowitchers and about 100 Marbled Godwits; 9th, fifteen Long-billed Curlew; Drakes Bay, 16th, two American Scoters, one Old-squaw; San Mateo and Dumbarton Bridges, 20th, American Golden-eye, Willets, Western Sandpipers, three Long-billed Curlews, 75+ Black-bellied Plovers; Cliff House, 23rd, Wandering Tattler, 20 Black Turnstones, two Ruddy Turnstones.

Mrs. A. B. Stephens: Redwood City salt ponds, January 2nd, four American Egrets, Snowy Plover, sixteen Yellowlegs; February 22nd, Benicia, fourteen Egrets, fifteen Whistling Swans.

Book Notices: "The Birds of Minnesota," by Thomas S. Roberts, M. D., in two volumes illustrated with ninety-two color plates by Allan Brooks, George Miksch Sutton, Walter Alois Weber, Francis Lee Jacques, Walter John Breckenridge, including one plate by the late Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Published by the Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn. Price $6.00.

Portraits of New England Birds drawn in color by Louis Agassiz Fuertes for "The Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States," by Edward Howe Forbush, can now be had bound separately in book form for $1.75 from the Secretary of the Commonwealth, R 118 State House, Boston, Mass.

February Meeting: The 186th regular meeting was held February 9, in room 19, Ferry Building with fifty-four members and guests present. President Charles A. Bryant presiding.

The speaker of the evening was Mrs. Ynes Mexia, who gave a very interesting talk entitled "Glimpses of Bird Life along the Amazon," illustrated with pictures and bird skins.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

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Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.

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Student memberships, $1.50 per year. Life memberships, $50.00

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer